

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6199

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, AS, CA

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE ON CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION
IN UNITED NATIONS

REF: CANBERRA 6077

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FOL IS TEXT OF PRESS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS BY PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM ON AUSTRALIAN POLICY TOWARDS CAMBODIA, AS EXPRESSED AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON NOV 8. IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE NOV 15 DFA OFFICIAL (WOOLCOTT) APPEARED TO ADD FURTHER CRITERION FOR AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT OF GKR, LINKING SUCH SUPPORT TO ACTION BY ASEAN NATIONS. DFA SEEMS UNSURE OF ITSELF ON ISSUE, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF WHITLAM'S WAVERING AND EQUIVOCATION ON CAMBODIAN POLICIES IN RECENT MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

2. QTE. QUESTION: FOLLOWING YOUR CONVERSATION IN PEKING WITH PRINCE SIHANOUK, CAN I ASK YOU WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN RELATIONSHIP NOW WITH THE ROYALIST GOVERNMENT IN CAMBODIA? HAS PRINCE SIHANOUK BEEN GIVEN ANY ASSURANCES? HAS HE BEEN TOLD, FOR INSTANCE, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL BE RECOGNISED IF THE LON NOL REGIME
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WERE TO FALL?

QTE. PRIME MINISTER: AUSTRALIA MAINTAINS RELATIONS WITH THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT. AS I SAID IN PEKING, AND MANY OF YOU WERE THERE WHEN I SAID IT, IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO AS LONG AS THAT GOVERNMENT IS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND PHNOM PENH. PRINCE SIHANOUK KNOWS THAT THAT IS OUR ATTITUDE AND THAT WHILE HE IS THE GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE HE CAN'T, OF COURSE, EXPECT TO BE RECOGNISED AS THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS COUNTRY BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. END QTE.

3. LATER DURING PRESS CONFERENCE WHITLAM ENGAGED IN FOLLOW QUESTION AND ANSWER EXCHANGE:

QTE. QUESTION: MY QUESTION FOLLOWS ON THAT ASKED BY DAVID BARNETT AND IT IS IN RELATION TO A STATEMENT THAT WAS ISSUED IN PEKING BY PRINCE SIHANOUK. TO CLARIFY THE POSITION ONE STEP FURTHER, PRIME MINISTER, HAS AUSTRALIA CUT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO THE LON NOL REGIME, HAS IT LIMITED ITS DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE THERE, AND ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO PRINCE SIHANOUK BEING INSTALLED BACK IN PHNOM PENH?

QTE. PRIME MINISTER: IN RESPECT TO THE LAST QUESTION, IT IS NOT FOR ME TO EXPRESS A VIEW. IT IS FOR THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA, I HOPE, TO CHOOSE THEIR GOVERNMENT WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. I WILL READ WHAT I SAID IN PEKING AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION ON THIS SUBJECT: WHILE I WAS IN PEKING WHERE PRINCE SIHANOUK RESIDES, I WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH HIM. HE IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED SPOKESMAN OF GRUNK AND FUNK. HE IS THE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF EITHER WHO IS KNOWN TO ME OR TO THE AMBASSADOR OR TO AUSTRALIANS IN GENERAL. IT WAS A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR AT FIRST HAND HIS VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY AND IN THE REGION. I WAS ASKED: INNER QTE IT DOESN'T SUGGEST ANY CHANGE IN OUR RECOGNITION OF THE PRESENT LON NOL GOVERNMENT END INNER QTE. I ANSWERED: INNER QTE NO, AS LONG AS THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT IS IN POSSESSION OF THE

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CAPITAL OF CAMBODIA AND IS IN THE UNITED NATIONS THE PRESENT AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT WILL CONTINUE. END INNER QTE. I WAS ASKED: INNER QTE HOW ARE WE VOTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS END INNER QTE. I ANSWERED: INNER QTE WE HAVE BEEN ABSTAINING ON THE PROCEDURAL ISSUES END INNER QTE. I ANSWERED: INNER QTE WE HAVE BEEN ABSTAINING

ON THE PROCEDURAL ISSUES END INNER QTE.
I WAS ASKED: INNER QTE WILL WE CONTINUE
TO ABSTAIN? END INNER QTE. I ANSWERED:
INNER QTE WHEN THE QUESTION OF THE SEATING
OF THE GOVERNMENT ARISES, WE WILL VOTE FOR
THAT GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH WE HAVE RELATIONS
BUT WE ARE ABSTAINING ON THE PRO-
CEDURAL MATTERS. WE DID NOT OPPOSE THE
INSCRIPTION OF THE ITEM. OUR CONCERN IN
CAMBODIA IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA
SHOULD HAVE A GOVERNMENT OF THEIR OWN WISH.
WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO PUT AN END TO
THE HOSTILITIES AND TO DETER ANY SUPPLIES
FROM OUTSIDE. IT IS THE ONLY PART OF INDO-
CHINA WHERE THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN A CEASE-
FIRE OR AN AGREEMENT OR AN ACCORD. THIS
IS ALL THE MORE DEPLORABLE SINCE, FOR SO
MANY YEARS, FROM THE GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954
UNTIL THE INVASION OF CAMBODIA BY AND FROM
SOUTH VIETNAM IN MARCH 1970, CAMBODIA HAD
ENJOYED AN UNDIMINISHED PEACEFUL IDENTITY.
END INNER QTE. END QTE.

4. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE NOV 15
WOOLCOTT (FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, SOUTH ASIA DIVI-
SION) SEEMED TO ADD FURTHER CRITERION FOR CONTINUED
AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR LON NOL GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION
TO REPEATING WHITLAM'S POINT THAT AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT
WOULD CONTINUE AS LONG AS LON NOL GOVERNMENT IS IN THE
UNITED NATIONS AND IN PHNOM PENH, WOOLCOTT SAID THAT
AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT ALSO ASSUMED CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR
GKR BY ASEAN NATIONS. CONTEXT MADE IT CLEAR THAT
WOOLCOTT WAS PARTICULARLY REFERRING TO INDONESIAN
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SUPPORT (WHICH ADAM MALIK CONFIRMED TO THE AUSTRALIANS
DURING HIS RECENT VISIT). HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT CLEAR
TO US WHAT AUSTRALIA MIGHT DO IF SOME OTHER ASEAN
STATE (MALAYSIA, FOR EXAMPLE) ABSTAINED OR EVEN VOTED
FOR GRUNK. AT THIS POINT DFA SEEMS UNSURE OF ITSELF
ON THIS ISSUE. WHITLAM HAS APPEARED TO WAVER AND
EQUIVOCATE ON CAMBODIAN POLICY OVER PAST SEVERAL
MONTHS TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT DFA OFFICERS ARE RE-
LUCTANT TO STATE AUSTRALIAN POSITION IN VERY CATEGORICAL
FASHION.
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